Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently amended) A surgical instrument for extracting a prosthetic device, comprising:

a distal portion transitionable from an insertion configuration to an extraction configuration, wherein the insertion configuration is adapted for displacement along a portion of a prosthetic device, and the extraction configuration is adapted for engaging and extracting the prosthetic device, the distal portion having a natural bias in the extraction configuration; and

a proximal portion connected to the distal portion.

2. (Original) The surgical instrument of claim 1 wherein the distal portion comprises at least one engaging member.

3. (Original) The surgical instrument of claim 2 wherein the at least one engaging member comprises a flexible material that is capable of being transferred from the insertion configuration to the extraction configuration.

4. (Original) The surgical instrument of claim 2 wherein the at least one engaging member comprises stainless steel.

5. (Original) The surgical instrument of claim 2 wherein the at least one engaging member is secured to a mounting block.

6. (Original) The surgical instrument of claim 2 wherein each of the at least one engaging member comprises at least one extraction prong.

7. (Original) The surgical instrument of claim 6 wherein each of the at least one extraction prong comprises a transverse flange.

8. (Original) The surgical instrument of claim 7 wherein the transverse flange comprises a hook-shaped configuration.

9. (Currently amended) The instrument of claim 7 wherein at least two ~~of the~~ transverse flanges are included which extend in generally opposite directions.

10. (Currently amended) The instrument of claim 7 wherein at least two ~~of the~~ transverse flanges are included which extend in generally parallel directions.

11. (Currently amended) An instrument for surgical extraction, comprising:

at least one extraction prong wherein the at least one extraction prong comprises a transverse flange, and that is adapted to be partially elastically deformed when in an insertion configuration; and

a mounting portion wherein the at least one extraction prong is secured to the mounting portion.

12. (Currently amended) The instrument of claim 11 wherein the at least one extraction prong is transitionable from ~~an~~ the insertion configuration to an extraction configuration, and wherein the at least one extraction prong is adapted to be in a non-deformed state when in the extraction configuration.

13. (Currently amended) The instrument of claim 11 wherein the transverse flange defines a reduced transverse profile for ~~an~~ the insertion configuration.

14. (Original) The surgical instrument of claim 11 wherein the transverse flange comprises a hook-shaped configuration.

15. (Currently amended) The surgical instrument of claim 11 wherein the at least one extraction prong comprises a flexible material that is capable of being transferred from ~~an~~ the insertion configuration to an extraction configuration.

16. (Canceled).

17. (Currently amended) The surgical instrument of claim 11 wherein the mounting portion comprises a mounting block, the mounting block comprising a connector stem and a transverse axial slot;

the connector stem being adapted to operably connect the mounting block to a substantially rigid shaft; and

the transverse axial slot adapted to retain at least one extraction prong.

18. (Currently amended) A method for surgical extraction, comprising:

inserting a surgical instrument having a distal portion transitionable from an insertion configuration to an extraction configuration, wherein the distal portion has a natural bias in the extraction configuration;

transitioning the distal portion to the extraction configuration;

engaging the distal portion with an implant; and

exerting an extraction force to extract the implant.

19. (Currently amended) The method of 18 further comprising displacing the distal portion along at least a portion of the implant, wherein the insertion configuration comprises partially deforming the distal portion and wherein the distal portion is returned to the natural bias after completion of the displacement.

20. (Original) The method of 18 wherein the distal portion comprises at least one transverse flange.

21. (New) The surgical instrument of claim 1 further comprising a substantially rigid shaft member disposed between the distal and proximal portions.

22. (New) The surgical instrument of claim 1 wherein the proximal portion comprises a handle.

23. (New) The surgical instrument of claim 1, wherein the prosthetic device has separable portions and the extraction configuration is adapted to exert no separation force on the prosthetic device.

24. (New) The surgical instrument of claim 1 wherein the distal portion comprises at least two opposing extraction prongs, the at least two extraction prongs having a natural bias that defines the maximum height of the extraction configuration.

25. (New) The surgical instrument of claim 1 wherein the distal portion is adapted to maintain opposing forces on inner surfaces of the prosthetic device during insertion and no opposing forces on the inner surfaces of the prosthetic device during extraction.

26. (New) The surgical instrument of claim 1 wherein the distal portion is adapted to extract only one plate of a multi-plate articulating prosthetic device.

27. (New) The surgical instrument of claim 1 wherein the distal portion is adapted to maintain the position of one articulating plate relative to another articulating plate of a prosthetic device during insertion.